



Bureau of Law Enforcement R3 Team *FY2018 Annual Report*

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INTRODUCTION

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has a long history of promoting safe and accessible hunting, angling, and shooting opportunities. In response to changing hunter and angler demographics, WDNR has integrated hunter (including shooting sports) and angler R3 into a single team housed in the Bureau of Law Enforcement. This report summarizes the efforts of staff statewide, in addition to the many volunteers and mentors whose contributions made the FY2018 Hunter, Angler, and Shooting Sports Recruitment/Retention/Reactivation program accomplishments possible.

R3 Team Mission

Promote and guarantee Wisconsin’s hunting and angling heritage through effective R3 techniques.

Vision

Establish and promote a Wisconsin Outdoor Lifestyle that includes robust hunting and angling participation through strong partnerships.

Goal

Slow the anticipated decline of hunters and anglers and improve access by partnering with stakeholders.

Focus 2018

Implementing alignment goals was a top agency priority in FY2018. Integrating R3 functions into the Recreational Safety and Outdoor Skills (RSOS) section of the Bureau of Law Enforcement will improve program delivery, effectiveness, and evaluation. Accordingly, this report will focus on the positions, partnerships and expanded opportunities that have emerged as a result of alignment. This year’s report is structured in three sections (Hunting, Angling, and Shooting Sports) that comprise our newly aligned R3 Team.

R3 TEAM COMBINED ANNUAL OBJECTIVES & EVALUATION

Establish the New DNR R3 Team

Objective: By June 30, 2018, establish the new R3 Team in the Recreation Safety and Outdoor Skills Section of the Bureau of Law Enforcement.

Results: As a result of agency alignment planning since 2016, a new R3 Team was created and implemented in the Bureau of Law Enforcement in 2018. WDNR hired its first ever R3 Team Supervisor in February to oversee the DNR’s multi-pronged R3 Program. The existing Hunter Education Administrator, Hunter Education Assistant, and National Archery in the Schools Coordinator were transferred to the R3 Team. An Angler R3 Coordinator joined the team in January 2018; and another R3 Coordinator was hired in July 2018. The R3 Team (*Figure 1*) works closely with two state R3 Coordinators hired by non-profit partners Pheasants Forever and the National Wild Turkey Federation.

To assist in inter-agency coordination, strategic planning, and program implementation, affiliates from the Bureaus of Wildlife Management, Fisheries Management, the Office of Applied Science and Community Financial Assistance are involved in R3 Team activities where appropriate.

The Recreation Safety and Outdoor Skills Section also created 5 new Outdoor Skills Trainer positions in FY2018, to support the Recreation Safety Programs (Hunter, Boater, Snowmobile, ATV/UTV, and Crossbow Education). These positions were filled in May 2018.

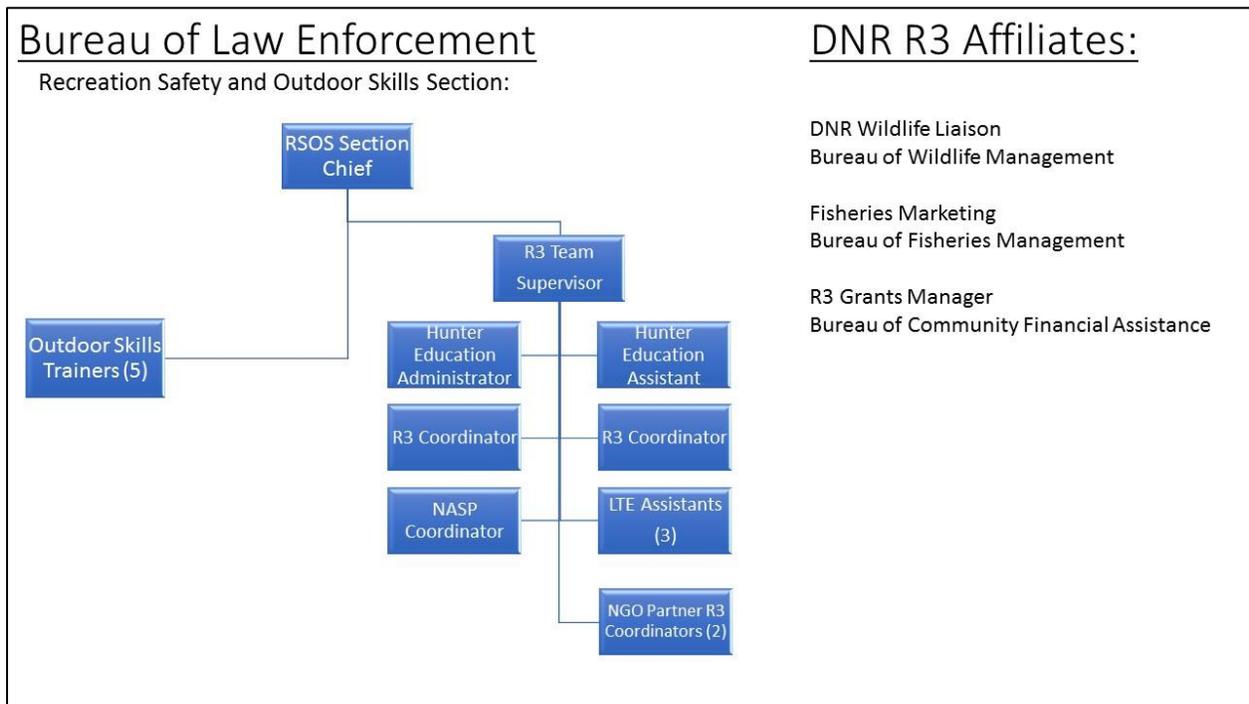


Figure 1. Bureau of Law Enforcement Recreation Safety and Outdoor Skills Section Team Structure and R3 affiliates.

Internal and External R3 Roadshows

Objective: Increase awareness of the R3 Team, its purpose, and its goals in FY2018, both within and outside the agency.

Results: The R3 Team Supervisor and staff have given nine presentations within the agency and to stakeholders in FY2018 to facilitate awareness and discussion of the R3 Team's purpose and work strategies. This includes 1. Discussing the relevancy of hunting, angling, and the agency, both historically and for the future; 2. Grounding discussions of R3 in the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model, pointing out that outdoor learning is a process, not a single event, and that continued social support is crucial for Retention and Reactivation of existing hunters, anglers, and shooting sports enthusiasts; 3. Fielding questions regarding agency alignment, details of current programs, and our strategy of adaptive management; and 4. How we can help foster R3 throughout the agency (how we can help other programs; and how other programs can help us). These presentations have occurred so far at the statewide annual meetings of the Bureau of Wildlife Management, Bureau of Fisheries Management, and Bureau of Law Enforcement; at regional staff meetings within these Bureaus; and with Bureau Supervisory staff.

The R3 Team Supervisor and NGO Partners gave more than two dozen presentations to external partners, including local chapters of Pheasants Forever and the National Wild Turkey Federation; and Wisconsin Outdoor Communicators Association, Wisconsin Conservation Congress, and Sporting Heritage Council.

Adult Recruitment and Training

There is a trend toward fewer but effective R3 programs focused on outcomes rather than outputs. Effective programs provide an introduction and continued pathway—through follow-up trainings—to those on the road to becoming hunters and/or anglers.

The R3 Team continues to expand novice adult training sessions, with angler training growing rapidly. There are several reasons to recruit and train adults: 1. they have the skills to handle equipment safely. 2. They have the maturity required for safety. 3. They have transportation. 4. They have money to spend. 5. They are strongly motivated to learn and continue. 6. They have the network to support hunting and even provide more new hunters in the future. 7. Finally, no one is a better recruiter of children into hunting than a parent. As these unique R3 programs have shown success, we have begun implementing train the trainer programs to expand our reach further.

Sporting Heritage Council

The Sporting Heritage Council was established in 2012 to advise the Governor, the Natural Resources Board, and state legislature on fishing, hunting and trapping issues. Consisting of 12 members, the council focuses on recruitment, retention and increasing access to resources and outdoor opportunities. R3 personnel staffed two Sporting Heritage Council meetings in FY2018, October 2017, and April 2018. The Council received R3 updates from the angler and hunter R3 efforts and toured the state's new public range. The Council also provided guidance to the four sub-award grant programs DNR has that provide funds for partners and stakeholders to utilize to expand our R3 efforts and public shooting opportunities.

HUNTER R3 ANNUAL OBJECTIVES & EVALUATION

Overall Number of Hunting Licenses Sold

For the first time in six years, the overall number of deer hunting licenses (gun, bow, and cross bow) sold has dropped below the long-term average (*Figure 2*). The rate of decline in licenses sold in FY2018 is similar to the rate of decline in FY2017 and will need to be monitored in future years.

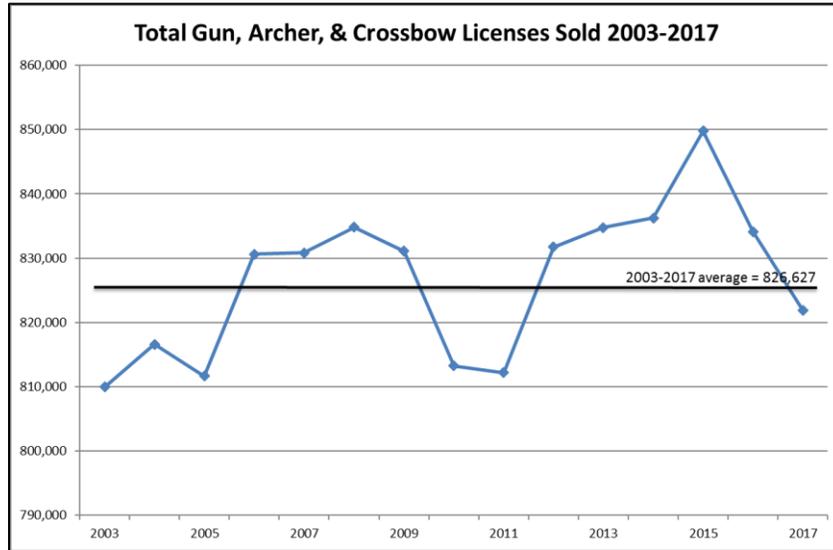


Figure 2. Total and average Gun, Archer, and Crossbow licenses sold from 2003 to 2017.

Resident Gun Deer Hunter Numbers at Projected Level

Hunter numbers have been predicted to decline over time and hunter numbers in license year 2017 (FY2018) were below the predicted number (*Figure 3*). There are a whole host of variables that influence hunter numbers including demographics, societal changes, economics, socio-economic status, and our efforts. As we collect more information in the years to come we will be able to further evaluate the connection between our efforts and the number of hunters.

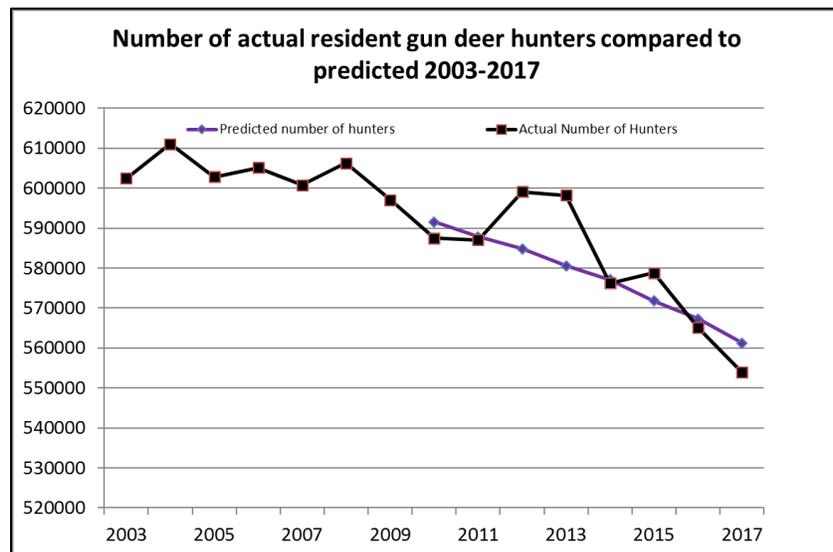


Figure 3. Number of actual resident gun deer hunters compared to predicted amounts from 2003 to 2017.



DNR & Partner Hunt for Food Programs

Objective: Increase the number of offerings during FY2018.

Results: Food continues to be a driving motivation for novice hunters and anglers, especially among millennials. When offered, classes fill rapidly and new food-motivated hunting websites—such as *locavore.guide* and *modernhunters.com*—continue to appear on a regular basis. Our R3 group administered 6 *new* Hunt for Food courses in during FY2018 along with several Fishing for Dinner programs. This brings the statewide total of Hunt for Food classes to 15 with more than 200 novice hunters reached this year. These new classes had between 4 and 17 participants each.

New programs in the Madison area included one each for pheasant, rabbits, and squirrels. These programs were coordinated as joint efforts with our NGO partners, Pheasants Forever and the National Wild Turkey Federation and were offered to Turkey and Deer Hunt for Food participants to give them additional opportunities to advance their skills, consistent with the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model. In partnership with the Wisconsin Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, additional opportunity for deer hunting

was offered through a Learn to Bowhunt pilot program. Pilot programs in other parts of the state included Turkey Hunt for Food in Viroqua and Learn to Hunt with Dogs near Stevens Point. These new programs were well-received by participants and will be offered again in FY2019.

These new programs and information will provide a good foundation for future growth. Interest among students and instructors remains strong, with additional deer programs planned for Horicon Marsh, Bong Recreation Area, Baraboo, Whitewater, Stevens Point, Rhinelander, Menomonie, Amery, and Viroqua in FY2018; as well as Hunt for Food with Dogs and Panfish for Dinner in the Madison area.

Mentor Training Seminars

Objective: Pilot offerings during FY2018.

Results: In efforts to meet the need for additional Hunt for Food mentors, Wisconsin DNR worked to provide state liability insurance to individuals who complete a mentor training in Wisconsin. DNR worked with Pheasants Forever's Hunting Heritage Coordinator to plan the Mentor Training curriculum, which includes segments on:

- The Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model
- North American Model of Wildlife Conservation
- Mentoring Strategy
- Adult Learning Principles
- Tips for Mentoring Women

Two pilot trainings were offered in Wisconsin in FY2018. Based on participant feedback, we will adapt the program to be available as an online course with a required in-person discussion section.

Learn to Hunt Female Participation

Objective: Grow the proportion of LTH participants and hunters who are female in FY 2018.

Results: In FY2018, female participation in this category dropped slightly to 26.1% from 28.5% in FY2017. This is a continued decline from a high of 31% in FY 2015. This level of female participation in the Learn to Hunt program remains significantly higher than the 15% level from several years ago. The percentage of *total* female hunters has remained consistent at 11% for the past 2 years, up from 10% in 2015. The Hunting and Shooting Sports Program will continue to pursue growth in both areas.

Mentored Hunting

The State of Wisconsin eliminated the minimum hunting age in March 2018. Previously, only individuals age 10 and older were allowed to purchase a hunting license. The elimination of minimum hunting age does not change Wisconsin's mentored hunting law, which has been in place since September 1, 2009. Anyone may hunt in Wisconsin without first completing a hunter education course if he or she is accompanied by a licensed hunter (mentor), hunts within arm's reach of the mentor, and follows other program rules. This one-on-one opportunity gives first-time hunters a chance to try hunting in a safe situation and enables veteran hunters to pass on their knowledge and passion for the outdoors.

Objective: Continue to increase the number of mentored hunting licenses sold.

Results: Mentored hunting licenses were purchased by 28,901 individuals in 2018 (11,345 adults and 17,556 children). This number increased slightly from 28,000 mentored licenses in FY2017, but still lower than highs around 30,000 in 2015 and 2016.

(New) First Time License Buyers

Beginning in 2012, the department offered deep discounts in license prices to first time buyers and returning buyers and sought to track participation.

The number of first time gun deer license sales declined 3.3% last year. Female license buyers increased slightly from 31% in 2016 to just over 34% in 2017. Adult first time license buyers comprised 65.7% of the total, an increase of about 3% from 2016.

In FY2018, DNR also surveyed purchasers of Wisconsin's discounted gun-deer hunting license ("first-time buyer" license). The primary objective was to track whether promotion of the program was correlated with increases in customer awareness. A secondary objective was to provide a snapshot into an emerging segment of hunters who are being recruited into the activity as adults ("adult-onset hunters").

Key findings of the study included:

1. Awareness of the discount program remains relatively low at time of purchase; and decreased from 28% to 22% between 2015 and 2016, despite an increase in media promotion leading up to the 2016 gun-deer hunting season.
2. Most buyers of the \$5.00 gun-deer hunting license, including those who were aware of the discount prior to their decision to purchase, said they would have purchased a license at the full price (\$24.00) anyway.
3. 18 to 29-year-old women make up the largest segment of first-time buyers.

4. Among new deer hunters, women were more likely to come from a hunting family than were men, and they were more likely to hunt with family members whereas as new, male hunters tended to hunt with friends.
5. The most influential determinant in recruiting new adult participants was an invitation from an existing hunter.

Email Marketing Pilot

In fall 2017, the Office of Applied Science assisted the Bureau of Law Enforcement with a study to assess the potential impact of email messaging on hunter retention and reactivation. The study was modelled after efforts commissioned by the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation in Georgia, which found small but significant gains in participation and revenue among new anglers who received up to four email reminders to purchase a fishing license. We extended this research by testing this approach not only on new license buyers, but also on lapsed license buyers, and by applying it to the distinct social and cultural environment of Wisconsin deer hunters.

Key findings:

- We found no measurable effect of any messaging on purchases of deer licenses by hunters who bought their first license in 2016.
- For lapsed hunters there was a statistically significant increase in license purchasing behavior among hunters who received an email reminder.
 - The positive effect of messaging was greater for formerly avid hunters than for less experienced hunters.
 - The positive effect of messaging on license purchases was greatest for hunters who had lapsed within the last two years, suggesting that the greatest benefit for email reminders is to reduce churn in license sales and retain current hunters.
- While the overall return on messaging efforts is small, there is a minimal investment in staff time and resources to send email reminders.
- Corroborating findings from the Georgia study, no significant benefit was found from including additional “newsletter” content.

Evaluating our Efforts

We continue to collaborate with a graduate student to evaluate the recruitment and retention rates of participants in DNR Hunter R3 programs using mark-recapture survival analysis. Results (*Figure 4*) will be submitted for publication in FY2019.

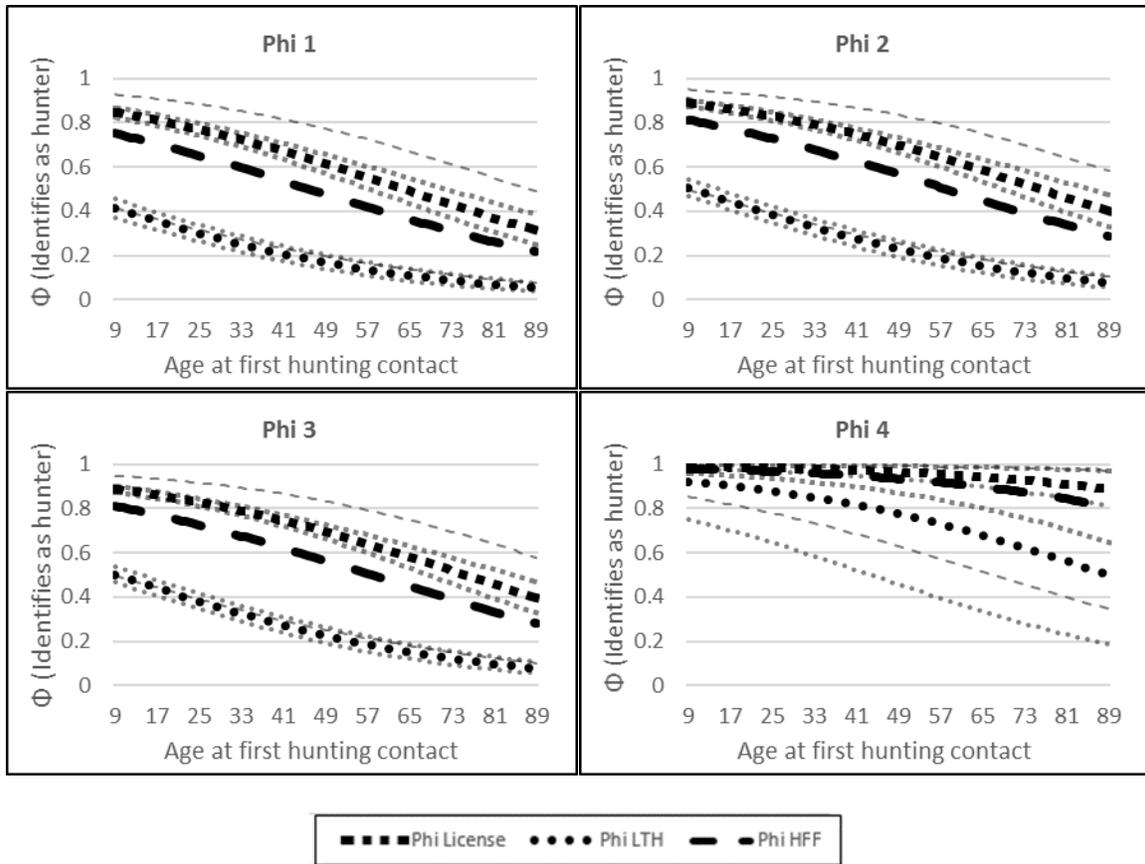


Figure 4. Survival estimates for first-time hunters of varying ages in 2011-2015; grouped by contact type (LTH, Hunt for Food, or License buyers). Square dots = License buyers; Round dots = LTH participants; Dashed line = HFF participants.

LTH participants have significantly lower survival rates than License purchasers (confidence intervals do not overlap). The real estimate for the LTH participants is much lower than the real estimate for HFF participants; but the confidence intervals overlap for these two groups. Survival rates decline similarly for all contact types as age at first contact increases.

Hunter Development Grant

To focus hunter training, development, and education programs on adults, females and families, WDNR developed the Hunter Development Grant in 2014. There is a great need for strategic, tested programs and results on which to base future program priorities. The grant program also focuses on developing and testing various programs' effectiveness.

Objective: By June 30, 2018, DNR to enter into at least 15 contracts to test new strategies for hunter recruitment and development; and/or support initiatives known to be effective based on available data.

Results: The department made \$250,000 available and increased the maximum award from \$10,000 to \$25,000 this biennium for grants to partners and stakeholders. We awarded \$223,000 in projects submitted in FY2018 (Table 1). The total requested amount was just over \$269,000. Several projects were offered partial funding because the reviewers believed the proposed activities may be helpful but required more partners and/or were slightly off target of the main priorities but worthy of a trial.

Applicant	Title	Amount Requested	Recommended Funding
Outdoor Heritage Center	Mark LaBarbera/Dan Small	\$25,000	\$15,000
Why Hunt? Building an Online Community Mentor Recruitment and Training for LTH Programs	Aldo Leopold Foundation	\$25,000	\$25,000
Discover Mediaworks	UW Stevens Point	\$24,900	\$24,900
Hunt for Food, LLC	Hunter Foodie Lifestyle	\$25,000	\$25,000
Hunter Safety and Learn to Hunt in Leopold Country	Learn to Hunt for Food	\$10,320	\$10,300
Learn to Hunt for Food Mentor Incentive	Aldo Leopold Foundation	\$15,400	\$15,400
Outdoors Access for All	Brad Hasheider	\$4,410	\$4,410
Pheasants Forever	Access Ability Wisconsin	\$16,463	\$10,000
Introduction to Hunting Inspiring Guest Speakers	Hunt for Food	\$25,000	\$21,100
Learn to Bowhunt	Aldo Leopold Foundation	\$20,600	\$10,300
Explore Bowhunting	WI Backcountry Hunters and Anglers	\$13,043	\$13,043
NWTF/DNR Hunt for Food Gear Sets	Chad Frase	\$24,907	\$10,000
Let's Go Hunting MKE	National Wild Turkey Federation	\$25,000	\$20,000
Hunt for Food with Dogs	Inner City Sportsmen's Club	\$5,025	\$5,025
UW Eau Claire Hunt Club	Wisconsin River Chapter NAVHDA	\$8,400	\$8,400
	New Hunter Training	\$4,850	\$4,850
Totals		\$269,800	\$222,748

Table 1. 2017 Hunter Recruitment, Development, Training, and Education Grant recommendations.

Communications and Outreach

To raise current and potential customer awareness of the hunting and shooting sports opportunities in Wisconsin, we purchased 45 radio spots aired on over 50 stations statewide, print advertising ran statewide in the general news media and the hunting/angling specific paper and we ran radio communications directly to current hunters and anglers ran on the Dan Small Outdoors radio and podcasts. We conducted digital outreach to recruit hunters as mentors with links to our web page. Again, we sponsored Wisconsin Foodie, a public television food show that included an episode on duck hunting. Finally, we conducted an email marketing pilot study and realized an increase in retention in hunters and anglers as a result.

SHOOTING SPORTS R3 ANNUAL OBJECTIVES & EVALUATION

McMiller Range Repairs

Objective: Begin implementation of McMiller Strategic Plan by June 30, 2018.

Results: The McMiller Range continues to bring in strong revenues through heavy use by the public. Implementation of the McMiller Strategic Plan began in FY2018 with meetings to initiate the construction of a new building to serve as a storage shed and workshop. New HVAC was also installed in the clubhouse. Additional repairs outlined in the strategic plan will continue into FY2019.

Public Shooting Range Development: Columbia County Public Shooting Range

Objective: Complete construction at Columbia County Public Shooting Range in Rio, Wisconsin by June 30, 2018.

Results: Construction on the range was completed in June 2018. The range opened to the public in early FY2019. Total project cost was \$420,000.



Public Shooting Range Maintenance

Objective: By June 30, 2018, have completed range maintenance projects on at least 4 ranges.

Results: Maintenance activities were undertaken at four public shooting ranges throughout the state for a total of over \$400,000. These proposed upgrades include providing handicapped access, re-builds, and many other maintenance projects. Specific public ranges with FY2018 projects are Wautoma, Boulder Junction, Caywood, Peshtigo, and Yellowstone.

ANGLER R3 ANNUAL OBJECTIVES & RESULTS

Angler R3 comprises Fishing for Dinner, the newly created Angler R3 Grant and the Angler Education Program. Angler Education, in turn, has several components that support Fishing for Dinner and broader R3 goals.

Angler R3 Grant

Objective: Establish an Angler R3 grant program and encourage potential partner organization to apply and grow the community of anglers. Write guidance and notify public via the web and mailing lists.

Results: Eleven grant applications were received and ten were reviewed for consideration. Certain reviewers will be helping applicants to succeed with their programs regarding compliance with the guidance, acceptable protocols and federal eligibility.

Fishing for Dinner

Objective: Engage potential anglers by offering Fishing for Dinner classes statewide to reach a diverse group of participants who will purchase fishing licenses after attending classes and join the community of anglers for the long-term. Exhibit and conduct demos at events, fairs and trade shows where young adults gather to learn about sustainable lifestyle practices, such as eating locally. Collect contact information on potential partners and participants to follow-up with people who express interest.

Results: With our partners, we conducted five multi-session classes; two in Milwaukee by the Urban Ecology Center and three experimental weekend classes in Door (one) and Vernon (two) counties. The classes served 35 people; of those, 16 participants had already purchased licenses in 2017-2018 and 19 benefited from the educational license waiver. Registration for the weekend format was disappointing at first with only six participants at the two summer weekend classes. Our revised format for a spring weekend class at the Driftless Folk School improved attendance, with 12 participants and 9 on a waiting list.



Classes cover basic fishing skills, where to fish, an overview of the Public Trust Doctrine, effective responses to threats to sustainability, safe and ethical harvest practices and cooking the catch. Partners include local chefs, culinary arts instructors, anglers, social service organizations and members of the sustainable and local foods community to encourage young adults to fish.

We have begun tracking license-buying habits of past class participants. The results show an uptick in license sales from this relatively small sample size for participating in the following year. Many members of our target audience are in transient life stages with their education plans and early career moves, which take them out of state. After multiple years have passed, license purchasing rate begin to normalize to pre-participation levels. These trends may indicate a need to continue individual post-program involvement.

Next steps will be to continue to 1.) track license purchasing habits of participants using their customer service numbers. 2.) engage partners willing to go beyond the one-day event to replicate this model statewide if we are to see more than a few dozen participants each year, and 3.) hold training sessions for willing partners, similarly to how angler education instructors were previously trained.



Participant license-buying habits and trends are below (*Figure 5*). Actual numbers and the percentages of participants purchasing fishing licenses are in *Table 2*. Trends show that there is a 5.9% average increase in fishing licenses purchased the year after a Fishing for Dinner class compared to the year prior. More data needs to be collected to determine long-term effects.

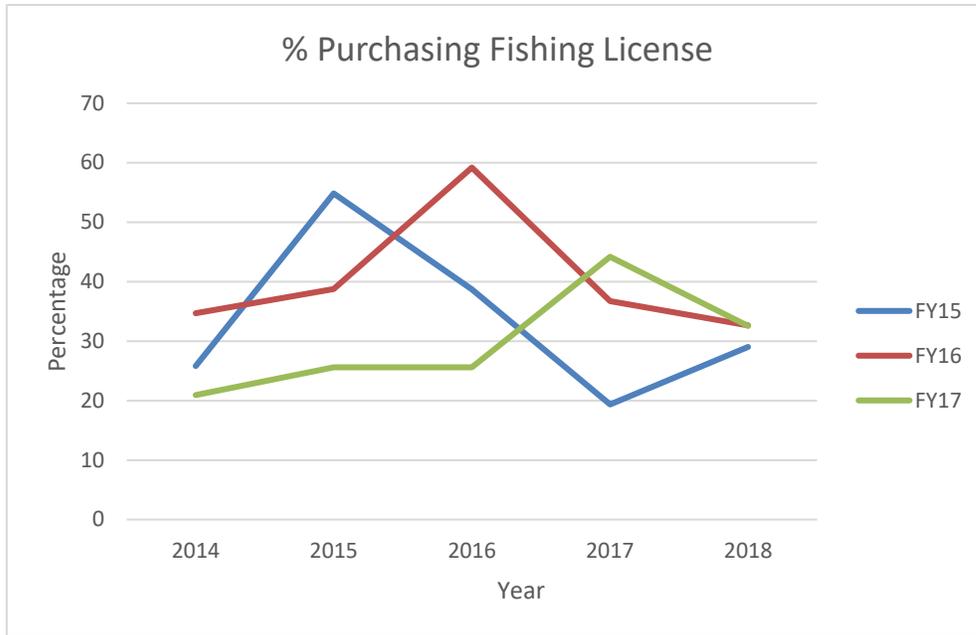


Figure 5. Percentages of Fishing for Dinner participants that bought fishing licenses each year from 2014-2018. Each line represents the fiscal year where participants attended a Fishing for Dinner class.

Fiscal Year	Total Participants	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
FY15 participants	31	8	17	12	6	9
FY15 % purchased		25.8	54.8	38.7	19.4	29.0
FY16 participants	49	17	19	29	18	16
FY16 % Purchased		34.7	38.8	59.2	36.7	32.7
FY17 participants	43	9	11	11	19	14
FY17 % Purchased		20.9	25.6	25.6	44.2	32.6

Table 2. Total participants and percentages that purchased fishing licenses based on the fiscal years they attended a Fishing for Dinner class.

A tabletop display was also exhibited at six venues over the course of eight days in 2017: Canoecopia; Pulaski Park in Milwaukee with Sixteenth Street Community Health Center; Harbor Fest at the School of Freshwater Sciences; Robyn Migliorini’s talk, “Giving Hunting a Shot,” at the Discovery Center – UW-Madison; Midwest Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies conference in Milwaukee and Fisheries Management’s statewide meeting. Fishing for Dinner events have been held in Dane, Washington, Milwaukee, Door and Vernon counties.

Angler Education Instructor Training and Activity

Objective: Train a minimum of 5 facilitators per year to lead and conduct angler education instructor training and certification workshops in their communities. Improve Angler Education Instructor training workshops with an emphasis on increasing instructor networking through local fishing, conservation clubs, and youth organizations to reach new audiences. Evaluate and survey instructors and program participants to determine long-term involvement, effectiveness and needs. Support efforts of certified and non-certified volunteers to deliver angler education programming and fishing clinics. Encourage

instructors and others to plan Free Fishing Weekend events that target adults. Purchase supplies and services for workshops and supporting volunteer efforts.

Results: Much of the proposed work directly related to instructor training was deferred during the transition. In total, 4 new instructors were trained and certified at 1 training workshop in St. Germain held by lead instructor, Jackie Scharfenberg. We received 3 or 4 other requests for Angler Education Instructor training but did not hold workshops due to logistical challenges during the transition time. Contact information was kept for possible, future workshops.

Based on reports, 20 instructors served 788 youth and 311 adults for a total of 1,099 people. More than half of the youth were served by the Headwaters Musky Club. Warehouse inventory reports indicate that 7 groups ordered 165 Junior Angler booklets. The 20 instructors provided 92 sessions over the course of 22 programs. Almost all programs were multiple sessions, which suggests repeat attendance by participants and aligns with our goals to have more long-term involvement in programs for those interested in fishing.



Fishing in the Neighborhood

Objective: Community organizations will be carefully selected to serve as Fishing in the Neighborhood (FiN) host sites and involve interested biologists. FiN'terns will be hired, trained and supervised to optimize their success in reaching diverse audiences, including people of license-buying age. Emphasize recruitment of bilingual candidates to bridge language barriers and improve compliance with regulations and adherence to the fish health advisory.

Results: A FiN season begins in May of one fiscal year when the interns, or FiN'terns, are trained, and ends in August of the next. The groundwork begins much earlier with recruitment of partners and interns and getting buy-ins from district staff. This review reflects the efforts launched in 2017-2018 and still underway in the current fiscal year, 2018-2019.

We maintained three FiN sites with three previous partnerships (Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary, Urban Ecology Center and Wehr Nature Center) and added one new partner at the Madison School Community Recreation (MSCR). The FiN'tern program continued to utilize college job boards to recruit many of this year's enthusiastic FiN'terns. All FiN'terns were assigned to assist at pre-planned Free Fishing Weekend events as an introduction; Potawatomi State Park, Urban Ecology Center, and three parks in Madison. The FiN'terns reported an approximate total of 2532 participant at their programs (participation numbers from the Free Fishing Weekend events that they assisted at are not included in this total). There were weekly events held by the FiN'terns such as the Fishing Club sessions and Saturday family fishing adventures at the Urban Ecology Center and summer enrichment programs with the Edison school and the Boys & Girls Club in Green Bay. At the Wehr Nature Center, the FiN'terns worked with a YMCA camp, Scouts, and



provided programming at the park beer gardens. The Madison team worked with the Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Goodman Community Center and utilized MSCR's pontoon boats for family fishing outings. The Milwaukee FiN'terns assisted at an introductory Fishing for Dinner outreach event hosted by 16th Street Community Health Center, which serves Milwaukee's Latino community.

The FiN'terns reported good relationships with their on-site supervisors at host sites and valued the field experience with DNR and USFWS staff. Madison FiN'terns worked with regional fisheries staff from Fitchburg on a more limited basis compared to the three crews based along Lake Michigan. Some FiN'terns expressed that setting up more opportunities with already established group, such as schools and clubs, might yield better turn-out at events. They also noted that children that were associated with a group were more engaged and cooperative in the learning process. Others also suggested we work to increase brand recognition to improve numbers. For all reported FiN'tern programs, youth and adult breakdown was approximately at 90% youth and 10% adults. Unsolicited comments from local organizations that were served, in cooperation with our partners, were glowing about the FiN'terns' program delivery and positive attitudes. FiN events have been held in Brown, Dane, Milwaukee and Waukesha counties.

License Waivers

Objective: Provide educational Learn to Fish license waivers to novice anglers that are part of an organized group participating in an approved program, either the DNR's Angler Education Program, Fishing for Dinner or one of their own design. Audiences are teenagers and adults.

Results: Provided Learn to Fish educational license waiver to 12 groups, including 7 high schools and 5 Fishing for Dinner classes. The waiver allowed teachers and group leaders to introduce 271 older teens and 43 adults of all ages to fishing, as part of an extended angler education or Fishing for Dinner class, either the DNR's or one of an organizers' design. License waivers have been used in events in Columbia, Kewaunee, Milwaukee, Ozaukee and Racine counties.

Tackle Loaner Program

Objective: Stock loaner sites with basic fishing equipment. Provide with specialty items to sites where there is staff interest and expertise to make proper use of it, as budget allows. Supply loaner sites with non-lead sinkers and instruct site managers to purchase non-lead sinkers when they need to make replacements on short notice, outside of the main distribution period. At least 1/3 of the sites that desire help with maintenance will receive it through volunteer recruitment.

Results: We currently have 60 tackle loaner sites statewide with all reporting. Reports indicate that 7229 individuals from 79 families and 133 different groups used gear. 996 days of fishing was logged among them - in many cases the groups shared gear. Parks served mainly family groups and individuals. Our service centers tend to serve larger groups from organizations and schools. The number of families could also be higher than reported since many sites noted only if the borrowers were campers or visitors and didn't distinguish if they were families. Six sites reported no use; we will transfer gear from sites where use is low to more active sites.

In the past, the field was given latitude to make site-specific purchases that enhanced their local efforts, beyond what was available from Central Office, but realignment caused some confusion regarding budget codes and local site management responsibilities. Without an LTE on board during the transition to help make bulk purchases and distribute to various sites, loaner sites were not served as well as in the past. Relatedly, Central Office made small purchases as necessary for FiN sites and Fishing for Dinner.

Publication and Printing for Aquatic Resources Education

Objective: Many publications are written for and placed on the Web whenever practicable. The following publications are a priority for education, outreach, and/or fisheries marketing and are included in this budget: rulers, wildcards and the *Wisconsin Fishing* poster. *These are Fish*, *A Big Splash of Color*, *A Splash of Color* and others will be printed as demand requires and as budget allows. Publications are made available to the public at various events and through Central Office and our warehouse. Those that support the efforts of our certified angler education instructors are given fiscal and distribution priority.

Print aquatic resources education publications based on customer and program needs assessments. Evaluate for content, cost-benefit, and customer preferences for receiving information. This also covers staff time to write, edit, update and revise new and/or existing publications, and contracting for external graphic design services. Provide recommendations on future publishing needs and indicate projected costs. Distribute the angler education newsletter, *FiN Clips*, electronically to facilitate communication and networking between certified angler education instructors in the state and other interested parties. Mail a hard copy version to instructors who do not have email accounts or do not routinely use computers.

Results: Web and delivery were used to distribute information and publications to the public, instructors and partner organizations as detailed below. Web content was written and formatted for deployment regarding fishing clinics, Fishing for Dinners, FiN, Free Fishing Weekends, and the Tackle Loaner Program. No publications were revised, created, or printed in FY2018. Based on warehouse inventory reports, Central Office Angler R3 staff entered 70 warehouse publication orders in response to requests for materials from instructors, staff and the public; 128,831 publications (90 different ones, plus regulations and 52 different Wildcards) that support Angler Education instructors, Angler R3 efforts, clinics and general program goals were shipped out or picked up. The 128,831 figure represents 39,731 Fisheries publications (not including regulations), plus 89,100 Fish Wildcards.

Free Fishing Weekend

Objective: Provide opportunities for children and families to engage in fishing together in collaboration with a wide range of Wisconsin communities. With an emphasis on community engagement, the Free Fishing Weekends are a catalyst for families and social groups to plan future fishing trips and will encourage people to fish at their local waters or explore other waters of the state.

Results: Two Free Fishing Weekends were held in FY2018 across the state. We held a summer event and a winter event. For the summer weekend in June, we provided materials and publicity for 24 events (another 3 were private); 22 events reported attendance figures totaling 4549 participants. Most reporting sites collect data on age breakdown which shows that of the 3558 reported, 1949 were young kids and 1609 were of license-buying age: (103) 16-18 and (1359) adults with kids and (147) adults without kids. Based on the expected attendance listed on the event proposals from the 2 non-reporting event sponsors, it is reasonable to estimate that another 207 people (93 youth and 114 adults) participated in Summer Free Fishing Weekend events. Our FiN'terns assisted at 6 of the events, including 2 held aboard MSCR pontoon boats. The winter Free Fishing Weekend is still slow to catch on, perhaps due to past years' experience of variable ice conditions and because it is an important weekend for fundraising events for several partners who host clinics at the June FFW. The winter events scheduled were held at 8 locations, attracting 762 participants with a breakdown of 302 adults and 460 youth.

Wild Rose Lake Sturgeon Exhibit

Objective: Complete Lake Sturgeon exhibit at Wild Rose with input from Wild Rose Hatchery staff, Fisheries Management Policy Team members, sturgeon team members, Menominee tribal members, Sturgeon for Tomorrow members and cultural experts at the UW-Stevens Point Museum of Natural History. Exhibit will be engaging and celebrate this iconic species that has held meaning to the people of Wisconsin from time immemorial. Funding will be provided from Sturgeon for Tomorrow and the Wisconsin Humanities Council.

Results: Installation was completed August 10, 2018 and an opening was held to publicly honor financial contributors: Sturgeon for Tomorrow, Wisconsin Humanities Council and those who contributed in other ways, including the cultural experts who provided valuable insights.

PARTNERING WITH NATIONAL R3 EFFORTS

National Hunting & Shooting Sports Action Plan - Strategies for Recruiting, Retaining and Reactivating Hunting and Shooting Sports Participants

The WDNR values our partnerships with national organizations and continues to be recognized nationally for our leadership in R3. We are the first state agency to fully integrate our program staff to include angling with hunting and shooting sports. This provides a natural pathway for prospective angler and hunters to more easily access opportunities to learn these outdoor skills and better coordination among staff. Here is a review of some recent partnerships.

The Council for the Advancement of Hunting and the Shooting Sports recently approved the National Plan. WDNR staff played an integral role in developing and completing this plan and will continue to integrate it into R3 (recruitment, retention, and reactivation) efforts here. Partnerships among the stakeholder community, in conjunction with an integrated framework to identify needed strategies and effectiveness measures, are key to stabilizing and increasing hunting and shooting sports participants. Coordination of local and national efforts under a unified plan will clarify where R3 initiatives are needed and what resources are required to support those efforts. Additionally, a national plan will provide guidance and structure for partnerships that can effectively meet the needs of new audiences who will ultimately inherit our nation's hunting and shooting sports heritage. Finally, a coordinated national strategy can provide direction on how the conservation community will need to address the challenges of the future—how we build a pathway leading to a lifelong participant and how we facilitate institutionalizing the process to becoming a hunter.

The purpose of the National Hunting and Shooting Sports Action Plan (Plan) is to identify, coordinate, and focus resources available for R3 at local and national levels. Implementing the recommendations contained in this plan will help ensure that the hunting and shooting sports heritage of the United States will persist.

The goals, or ultimate outcomes, of this plan are two-fold:

- 1. To increase participation in hunting and the shooting sports*
- 2. To increase support for hunting and the shooting sports*

National Implementation Plan

As follow up to the national plan, the Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports is developing an implementation plan. WDNR staff have been invited to serve a key role on the team developing the implementation plan.

Recommendations and Strategic Tools for Effective Angler Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation (R3) Efforts

This document was published in November 2016 and was a product of the two-year partnership Aquatic Resources Education Association (AREA) and Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) to develop guidelines for increasing the effectiveness of angler R3 efforts nationally.

The primary goal of the Angler R3 Recommendations is to enable state agencies, nongovernment organizations and industry stakeholders to assess their angler R3 efforts and address gaps to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their individual and collective work. The recommendations identify opportunities for state agencies and organizations to improve their capacity to design, implement and evaluate angler R3 efforts; develop strategic angler R3 program priorities; and improve partnerships to collaboratively implement angler R3 efforts.

The Angler R3 Recommendations utilize the expertise and strategic tools, developed by the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) and Bob Byrne Consulting, for R3 efforts utilized by the hunting and shooting sports and build upon the foundation provided by RBFF's *Best Practices Workbook for Boating, Fishing and Aquatic Resources Stewardship Education*. The Angler R3 Recommendations were developed with the support and contributions of the Angler R3 State Agency Working Group, comprised of state fish and wildlife agency education and marketing staff throughout the country with knowledge and experience in developing and implementing R3 efforts. The next step is to develop implementation guidelines.

Looking Ahead – Plans for FY2019

- Continue integration and expansion of effective hunter and angler R3 in the RSOS section of the Bureau of Law Enforcement.
- Establish more partnerships to create R3 specialists, as has been done with PF and NWTF.
- Complete another funding cycle of the Shooting Range Grant Program.
- Establish more Hunt for Food and Fishing for Dinner Courses in Wisconsin.
- Test marketing strategies to improve retention and reactivation.
- Increase focus on evaluation, effectiveness, and return on investment. Identify gaps in current offerings, demand, and effectiveness and fill gaps with effective solutions.
- Collect data, measure, evaluate, adapt, and report out on success and effectiveness.
- Continue to network with current hunters to enlist additional ideas and participation in hunter recruitment and retention.
- Staff and report to the Sporting Heritage Council.
- Wisconsin's R3 Supervisor has been invited to participate in the R3 Planning Implementation group in FY2019.